1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
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Authority of the Mother's People

854 574 According to Godefroy, during the whole of this period and during the next few months the mother's people continue at frequent intervals to invade the father's house, whence they visit the women's lodge in the exercise of their "right of inspection" over the mother and child. In the special case cited by him, when the child, in this case a girl, was about three or four months old the mother took it for a short stay in her parents' village, returning with presents of food.[1]

593 604 Henceforth "it is the mother's side of the family that exercises all authority over the children. The mother's eldest brother is in fact the legal 'father,'[2] and it is him that the children call *tete*, the word used elsewhere for 'father.'[3] The lack of social respect paid to the real father is shown by the fact that he is actually called by his own children by his personal name, not only in address, but even when his children are speaking of him to others."[4] Thus also "until he is married, a boy regards the family of the mother as his own true family, . . . When the child finds the parental scoldings irksome, he takes refuge with his mother's brother, and may even stay with him several months until his anger cools."[5] The rôle of the mother's brother in this respect is described as one of "guardianship and moderation."[6]

Special Rites with Regard to the Eldest Son

852 In addition to the rites described above there are two special rites connected with the birth and dedication of an eldest son. As in the more aristocratic sections of our own society in which primogeniture is a recognised institution, so also in Vao considerable emphasis is laid on the position of the eldest son. Thus, in the tale dealing with the foundation of the Vao Maki, To-wewe, the founder, was one of ten brothers, of whom he himself was the eldest.[7] The pattern of ten brothers is a common one throughout Malekula, closely associated with the decimal arrangement of upright stones on the Upper Side of the dancing-ground during High Maki and of the corresponding sacrificial stakes during Low Maki. It will be seen later how during High Maki each tenth stone may be furnished with a shrine.[8] In Atchin such an arrangement has been stabilised to the extent that the division of each village into Quarters has disappeared and has been replaced by a division into ten families, each

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 111-12.
[2] This of course only means that he exercises certain rights elsewhere exercised by the father.
[3] But see p. 127. The term of reference for the mother's brother in *sogut*.
[4] Godefroy, ibid. p. 109.
[5] Ibid. p. 111. [6] Ibid. p. 114. [7] See p. 284. [8] See p. 425.